

REGULAR WEEKLY SESSION

ROANOKE CITY COUNCIL

April 5, 2004

9:00 a.m.

The Council of the City of Roanoke met in regular session on Monday, April 5, 2004, at 9:00 a.m., the regular meeting hour, in the Emergency Operations Center Conference Room, Room 159, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, S. W., City of Roanoke, Virginia, with Mayor Ralph K. Smith presiding, pursuant to Chapter 2, Administration, Article II, City Council, Section 2-15, Rules of Procedure, Rule 1, Regular Meetings, Code of the City of Roanoke (1979), as amended; and pursuant to Resolution No. 36193-010603 adopted on January 6, 2003, which changed the time of commencement of the regular meeting of Council to be held on the first Monday in each month from 12:15 p.m. to 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Council Members C. Nelson Harris (arrived at 9:25 a.m.), Linda F. Wyatt (arrived at 9:15 a.m.), William D. Bestpitch, M. Rupert Cutler, Alfred T. Dowe, Jr., Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr., and Mayor Ralph K. Smith-----7.

ABSENT: None-----0.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Darlene L. Burcham, City Manager; Timothy R. Spencer, Assistant City Attorney; Jesse A. Hall, Director of Finance; and Mary F. Parker, City Clerk.

CITY COUNCIL: A communication from Mayor Ralph K. Smith requesting that Council convene in a Closed Meeting to discuss vacancies on certain authorities, boards, commissions and committees appointed by Council, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(1), Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, was before the body.

Mr. Bestpitch moved that Council concur in the request of the Mayor to convene in a Closed Meeting as above described. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cutler and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----5.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Members Harris and Wyatt had not arrived when the vote was recorded.)

ITEMS LISTED ON THE 2:00 P.M. COUNCIL DOCKET REQUIRING DISCUSSION/CLARIFICATION; AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE 2:00 P.M. DOCKET:

CELEBRATIONS/VALLEY VIEW MALL: With regard to a report of the City Attorney on the 2:00 p.m., Council docket requesting authorization for waiver of the City's sovereign immunity in connection with use of Valley View Mall for Citizens Appreciation Day on Saturday, April 17, 2004, Council Member Cutler inquired if the same action was requested in 2003; whereupon, the Assistant City Attorney advised that the matter was not brought to the Council for action in 2003, however, waiver of sovereign immunity is considered to be standard procedure for most shopping centers.

COMMONWEALTH BUILDING-LIBRARIES: With regard to a communication from the City Manager on the 2:00 p.m., Council docket requesting approval of Amendment No. 2 to the asbestos and lead abatement services contract between the City and Waco, Inc., to increase the contract amount by an additional \$75,000.00, Dr. Cutler questioned the status of the project and Mayor Smith questioned what the additional costs will entail.

The City Manager advised that expanding the contract to include additional investigation in the Commonwealth Building is the prime reason for the increase in costs and called attention to a previous discussion with Council regarding the need for an investigation of lead abatement in not only the Bankruptcy Court area, but throughout the entire building.

Council Member Bestpitch questioned the process in regard to making a long term commitment for any usage of the Commonwealth Building, as opposed to the possibility of converting the building to accommodate the downtown public library.

The City Manager advised that no long term leases will impact the City's ability to use the building for library purposes; Council may direct City staff to ensure that any future leases are executed for a short period of time, or on a year to year basis, in order to keep all options open; staff has advised the library consultant to evaluate the Commonwealth Building for suitability as a potential library location; and nothing done to this point would negate a different use of the building in the future. She stated that no cost estimate has been submitted to Council for lead and asbestos abatement which will be known upon completion of the study; Amendment No. 2 to the contract with Waco, Inc., will authorize sufficient funding to enable completion of the analysis; and the City will soon be under contract for renovation work for the Bankruptcy Court expansion.

Mr. Bestpitch made the observation that lead and asbestos abatement needs to be done in any event, the library evaluation is in progress with an option to utilize the Commonwealth Building, and the City is making a major investment to renovate the building for the Bankruptcy Court which would seem to argue against using the building for library purposes in the future. He added that now is the time to think about the feasibility of spending a significant amount of money on a renovation that may be in place for only a short period of time, as opposed to not waiting until a situation occurs where options that the Council may want to consider have been closed.

Dr. Cutler stressed the importance of keeping all options open for use of the Commonwealth Building for library purposes.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION BY THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL:

NORFOLK SOUTHERN CORPORATION: Dr. Cutler inquired as to how the City could support the Heartland Corridor project of Norfolk Southern; whereupon, the City Manager advised that letters were forwarded by the City Manager and the Mayor in support of the project and Council will be advised if other actions are necessary.

Dr. Cutler questioned if the City administration knows what will be needed in terms of the intermodal facility; whereupon, Mr. Fitzpatrick stated that if it is to be an up to date, modern facility, there is likely no place in the City of Roanoke where it could be located; the facility most likely would need to be located somewhere along the main line where a train could be pulled in to off load and on load containers without changing the train; and the railroad has looked throughout the Roanoke Valley for quite some time, without success, for a location within the urban core of the City.

There was further discussion in regard to the east end shop property and its potential future use should the railroad decide to de-access some of the land; whereupon, the Mayor stated that the City should be ready to seize any opportunity for potential use of the property.

Council Member Fitzpatrick advised that the tracks that run parallel to Shenandoah Avenue are currently active yard tracks and although the railroad has stopped using some parts of the interior of the yard, it is still a major hub and there is no indication that the railroad wants to change its operation.

Vice-Mayor Harris entered the meeting.

HOUSING/AUTHORITY: Council Member Cutler inquired if the City Manager wished to make comments regarding sites for the Housing Design Competition; whereupon, the City Manager advised that a list of City properties, as well as private property will be forwarded to Council; City properties and Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority properties were identified; several private developers were contacted who had expressed a willingness for the City to promote their property on the website; the City would prefer that the sites represent a broad spectrum of neighborhoods, although there is some interest in concentrating in the immediate downtown area and adjacent areas; and opportunities will continue to be explored prior to the deadline for designation of specific sites. She further advised that there is an interest in having sample sites available on the City's website so that as the description of the competition is rolled out there will be an opportunity to reflect on the kinds of neighborhoods where housing design will occur; as competition proceeds and is unveiled there will be a need to be site specific; and other opportunities such as those properties that are identified for auction for delinquent taxes will be considered. She stated that no specific request for funding has been submitted to the City to this point; a number of other activities will be associated with the project which include housing arrangements for architectural students who win the design competition and visit the City next summer in connection with the actual building of the structure(s); and the selection jury will convene in the City of Roanoke, although full membership has not been identified at this time.

Later during the meeting, the City Manager distributed copies of City properties which are suggested to be included on the website. She stated that before such properties are made available for housing design construction, Council will be requested to take specific action following a public hearing.

ROANOKE ARTS COMMISSION/ART ACQUISITION: Dr. Cutler called attention to the issue of the Unity Sculpture and the proposed location in which he noted that the Roanoke Arts Commission has selected one site and the artist prefers another site; whereupon, he inquired if there is a solution to the situation.

The City Manager advised that she suggested to the Chair of the Roanoke Arts Commission that he formally bring the site recommendation of the Arts Commission to Council; a site subcommittee of the Roanoke Arts Commission is reviewing a possible alternative site in Elmwood Park; the Roanoke Arts Commission will suggest that the site be held for a certain period of time while fundraising for the Unity Sculpture takes place, however, it would appear that any person making a contribution would want to know the location of the Unity Sculpture prior to making a donation; and the location of the sculpture is a decision that only Council can make. Without knowing the specific site location in Elmwood Park, she expressed concern in regard to the City's ability in the future to make a decision regarding the relocation of the main library.

Council Member Fitzpatrick called attention to the potential of a conflict of interest in terms of funding; and the Chair of the Roanoke Arts Commission should understand that the artist is raising the money for the project which makes it different from other kinds of City projects.

Vice-Mayor Harris called attention to the importance of City staff reviewing the proposal of the Roanoke Arts Commission before it is presented to the Council.

The City Manager advised that a City staff liaison (Laurie Wood) has been assigned the responsibility of working with the Roanoke Arts Commission to address such issues as the process of funding, a staff position that was requested in conjunction with the Public Art Plan, and the Unity Sculpture.

COMMITTEES/COMMUNITY PLANNING: Dr. Cutler called attention to the importance of City of Roanoke representation on the Metropolitan Planning Organization as the organization grows, and the importance of Metropolitan Planning Organizations along I-81 working together.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING-DISABLED PERSONS: Council Member Bestpitch inquired as to what has been accomplished by restricting accessibility to the Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, to the main entrance on Church Avenue, S. W., compared to the inconvenience of citizens and employees by not being allowed to use other entrances and exits, particularly the Second Street ramp to the north part of the building. He stated that all persons should feel welcome in the Municipal Building, regardless of their station in life, if they have business to conduct, but at the same time the Municipal Building should not be a hangout for people who do not have business to conduct and are simply passing through. He stated that by the time the doors are unlocked to the Municipal Building in the morning, those persons who have legitimate City business to conduct should be provided with more convenient ingress and egress to and from the building, particularly those with disabilities; therefore, he suggested that consideration be given to making access to the Municipal Building more convenient for citizens, particularly those with disabilities.

Council Member Wyatt expressed concern with regard to difficulty entering the Municipal Building during evening hours; providing only one entrance/exit to the building creates a safety issue, as well as an inconvenience to employees and citizens; and the Municipal Building has become a user unfriendly facility.

The Mayor spoke in support of having a secure Municipal Building, while not creating an inconvenience to citizens and employees.

The City Manager advised that the process began with the initiation of identification badges for City employees prior to the September 11, 2001 event; concerns were expressed by City employees who had encountered unauthorized persons in their work areas; following the September 11 event and as the country went to various levels of security, the City was advised by local law enforcement authorities that there were too many access points to the Municipal Building, therefore, an attempt was made to reduce the number of entry/exit areas; in the case of emergencies, all doors open outward and an alarm is sounded; and the goal was to reduce the number of access points so as to have a better understanding of who is in the Municipal Building. She advised of plans to implement a key card type system to record persons entering the building; the handicap entrance on Second Street has remained open and is used by handicapped persons; it was proposed to construct a ramp on the Church Avenue side of the building, but the proposal was discarded due to lack of support by the Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities; and the Second Street ramp leading to the north side of the Municipal Building has not been opened inasmuch as the Registrar's Office is primarily the only occupant on the first floor of the building. She advised of plans to install a handrail in the middle of the Church Avenue steps for safety purposes, and called attention to other suggestions for improved security that were offered, but not implemented such as barricading parking areas.

Ms. Wyatt addressed the matter of persons who smoke in the vicinity of the Church Avenue main entrance to the Municipal Building which looks unsightly and creates a congested area. She suggested that a smoking area be established somewhere out of view by the general public.

Mr. Bestpitch inquired as to what action would be required in order for all doors to the Municipal Building to remain open; whereupon, the City Manager advised that it would involve removing the alarms; however, she expressed concern in doing so because the north side of the Municipal Building is sparsely occupied at this time since the Social Services Department relocated to the Civic Mall on Williamson Road.

Mr. Fitzpatrick encouraged the opening of the Second Street side to the Municipal Building first and that Council be advised if any problems or threatening situations occur.

The Mayor called attention to what could be considered an unsafe working area due to the location of the Office of the Assistant to the Mayor on the fourth floor of the Municipal Building.

Mr. Harris moved that the Second Street entrance to the Municipal Building be opened on a trial basis, with a report to Council in 60 days. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fitzpatrick and adopted.

SISTER CITIES: The Mayor advised that a delegation from Wonju, Korea, Roanoke's Sister City, will visit the City of Roanoke from May 12-16, 2004, and the Sister Cities Committee has requested that a lunch or dinner be hosted by the City in honor of the 40th Anniversary of the Roanoke/Wonju Sister City relationship.

Following discussion, it was the consensus of Council to host a 40th Anniversary Dinner in honor of the Roanoke/Wonju Sister City relationship on Friday, May 14, 2004, at The Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center.

BRIEFINGS:

STATE HIGHWAYS: The City Manager introduced a briefing on Interstate 581/U. S. Route 220 Visual Improvement Landscape recommendations.

Robert K. Bengtson, Director of Public Works, advised that:

- The City of Roanoke and the Virginia Department of Transportation, along with Virginia Tech's Community Design Assistance Center, planned a "gateway" into and through the City of Roanoke.
- The conceptual master plan includes landscape improvements along the ten miles of I-581/U. S. Route 220 and at each interchange.
- The City's desire is to visually enhance the corridor while VDOT wishes to reduce the maintenance of existing lawn areas.
- Planning includes a "reforestation/meadow" approach since typical planting beds would not work well in this particular corridor, due to the large size and scale of corridor and interchanges, and includes the following types of landscaping:

Forest Stable, low maintenance ecosystem

Meadow Long grasses and wildflowers to be mowed once per year

Pastoral landscape groupings of trees in a mowed lawn (most expensive to build and maintain)

Lawn Verge – Edge of grass maintained along the road

- Interchange designs would use these types of landscaping in combination to create a series of forested nodes with a variety of pastoral and meadow schemes; and the lawn verge would occur at all locations to tie the design together.

- In an effort to achieve a more immediate visual impact, plans were modified to add formal planting areas within the design at appropriate locations.
- Corridor design also identified approximately 12 critical areas where enhancement or screening of views from the corridor would be beneficial.

Council Member Cutler inquired as to whether a proposed budget has been prepared and a description of the role and responsibility of each of the partners in the project; i.e.: the Virginia Department of Transportation, the City of Roanoke, Valley Beautiful, businesses, etc; whereupon, Mr. Bengtson advised that at this time, the City will not have a role in the maintenance of any of the areas along I-581, the approach being that VDOT will maintain the reforested areas, meadow areas and pastoral landscape clusters of trees, with a five year commitment by the person or business committing to a specific area, the cost of which would vary from interchange to interchange.

The City Manager advised that the City's Volunteer Coordinator has prepared a formal Volunteer Program and expressed an interest in encouraging businesses, individuals, etc; to adopt a spot, or street, or formal flowered area, and commit to the five year maintenance of the area once plantings are completed. She also advised that this kind of need was indicated in the City's Long-Range Transportation Planning process.

From a business point of view, the Mayor stated that a five year commitment might meet with some resistance by the business community because businesses have varying degrees of successful years.

There was discussion in regard to maintenance in which it was noted that City Jail inmate crews currently handle some of the road side maintenance.

Ms. Wyatt advised that as the first I-581 exchange is completed, a ceremonial event should be held to call attention to enhancements and to point out that any person convicted of littering will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Mr. Fitzpatrick supported the recommendations and agreed that the City should ask businesses for a five year commitment, but if a five year commitment is not feasible, the City should be amenable to a two year commitment; and Valley View Mall will be affected by two I-581 interchanges, therefore shopping center officials should be contacted in regard to participating in the program. He called attention to a recent article that appeared in *The Roanoke Times* concerning a citizen who wishes to plant and maintain trees at various locations on I-581 and suggested that the City offer its support.

Mayor Smith suggested that the City obtain a written commitment from the Virginia Department of Transportation regarding I-581 entrances/exits to the City, volunteers, safety issues, etc. He stressed the importance of providing a good visual impression for those persons traveling the I-581 gateways to the City.

Mr. Bestpitch moved that the City Attorney be instructed to prepare the proper measure to be forwarded to the appropriate officials of the Virginia Department of Transportation in support of a project initiated by a citizen to plant trees at various locations along I-581. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fitzpatrick and adopted.

At 10:40 a.m., the Mayor declared the Council meeting in recess for a meeting of the Budget and Planning Committee, to be followed by a meeting of the Audit Committee.

At 12:00 p.m. , the Council meeting reconvened in Room 159, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, S. W., for a joint meeting of Council and the Roanoke City School Board, with Mayor Ralph K. Smith and School Board Chair Gloria P. Manns presiding.

PRESENT: Council Members C. Nelson Harris, Linda F. Wyatt, William D. Bestpitch, M. Rupert Cutler, Alfred T. Dowe, Jr., Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr., and Mayor Ralph K. Smith-----7.

ABSENT: None-----0.

SCHOOL TRUSTEES PRESENT: William H. Lindsey, Alvin L. Nash, Robert Sparrow, Kathy G. Stockburger, David B. Trinkle, Ruth C. Willson and Chairperson Gloria P. Manns-----7.

ABSENT: None-----0.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Representing the City of Roanoke: Darlene L. Burcham, City Manager; Timothy R. Spencer, Assistant City Attorney; Jesse A. Hall, Director of Finance; Mary F. Parker, City Clerk; Rolanda B. Russell, Assistant City Manager for Community Development; and George C. Snead, Jr., Assistant City Manager for Operations.

Representing the Roanoke City Public Schools: E. Wayne Harris, Superintendent; and Cindy H. Lee, Clerk to the School Board.

Following lunch, the business session convened at 12:40 p.m.

SCHOOLS-HEALTH INSURANCE STIPEND FOR RETIRED TEACHERS:

Council Member Wyatt advised that for some time retired teachers have tried to obtain a State stipend of \$75.00 to be used toward the cost of health insurance, which is available provided that the locality will fund an additional \$30.00, and amounts to approximately \$213,000.00 per year from the City of Roanoke.

Superintendent Harris called attention to two health insurance options currently available to retired school employees; one option is provided through the Virginia Retirement System to all school employees who are retired under the State's retirement system; the second is a health insurance option which is offered through the City of Roanoke for City employees; because transportation, food service, maintenance and custodial employees are employed by Roanoke City Schools, but are participants in the City's retirement system, one system cannot be discussed without the other; if the School Board were to approve a credit toward health insurance for retired employees, it would also be appropriate to provide the same insurance credit for those school employees who participate in the City's retirement system and the cost would be more than the \$213,000.00 per year referenced by Ms. Wyatt. He explained that currently those employees who are members of VRS receive an automatic health insurance credit of \$2.50 per month for each year of service up to a maximum of \$75.00 per month, or \$900.00 annually from the State; an additional amount of \$30.00 per month, or \$1,260.00, annually could be received by retirees if approved by the School Board toward health insurance costs; there is no question that health insurance premiums have increased dramatically over the past several years; however, the impact to the School budget of providing \$30.00 per month, or \$1,260.00 annually, toward the credit that retirees currently receive would amount to approximately \$226,879.00 which would be a recurring cost that would continue to escalate as the number of employees increase. He noted that 16 school districts out of 133 have approved the option; most of the school districts that have approved the option are small jurisdictions and have small numbers of retirees; from the Roanoke area, only the Counties of Botetourt and Craig and the City of Salem have approved the option; and across the Commonwealth of Virginia, most large school districts do not provide the credit due to recurring costs. In reviewing the City's health insurance credit, he advised that \$206.25 per month, or \$2,475.00 annually is provided toward the cost of health insurance for retired employees; and it would cost the school system an additional \$62,700.00 for the next fiscal year added to the \$226,879.00. In preparing past fiscal year budgets, he stated that the request was viewed as a worthy benefit, but other issues have competed for funding, therefore, no recommendation has been made to the School Board.

The City Manager stated that the split between employee groups into different retirement systems is unusual and is not the norm in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and school districts in Virginia are required to participate in the VRS system and do not have the option that the City of Roanoke and nine other communities have chosen; i.e.: a private retirement system. She inquired as to why there are classified employees in one retirement system versus the other, should the policy continue for the future, and does the matter warrant review by staff.

Dr. Harris advised that with two retirement systems, other issues in addition to insurance benefits are affected; the City's retirement system is a better system than VRS in terms of final retirement benefits and he did not know the background for two retirement systems.

Chairperson Manns advised that the question is, does two retirement systems make sense, and is there a need to change the structure in the future. The City Manager advised that the City administration would be willing to work with the School administration to study the issue.

Dr. Harris advised that Richard A. Kelley, Assistant Superintendent, can provide historical data on how the two retirement systems evolved and report back to the School Board and the Council.

CONSOLIDATION OF CITY/SCHOOL PROCESSES; I.E.: PURCHASING, HUMAN RESOURCES AND HEALTH CARE:

Dr. Cutler spoke to the merits of consolidation of processes such as purchasing, human resources and health care. He referred to an earlier discussion as a part of the Audit Committee meeting with regard to mowing operations on school grounds and inquired if mowing and playground maintenance operations could be consolidated for the mutual benefit of the City and the Schools. He suggested that there be some form of bench marking to determine how the issue is addressed by other localities.

Dr. Harris advised that other cities engage in a number of joint projects; whereupon, he called upon Dr. Crystal-Cregger, Supervisor of Procurement and Manager of Purchasing and Contract Services, to address the issue.

Dr. Cregger advised that meetings have been held by City/School staff to identify areas of consolidation of services such as motor fuel for the automotive fleet, towing services, and office supplies, and the City of Roanoke is working with the City of Lynchburg to consolidate the fuel contract which will lead to more buying power for the localities.

Dr. Harris advised that the School system is also working with the City on a joint minority businesses enterprise conference which will be held in June, 2004.

Dr. Cutler advised that the Municipal Auditor presented a thorough report on playgrounds, periodic inspections and certification of persons who perform inspections and operate motorized equipment, in order to maintain the parks and playgrounds, and the importance of ensuring that playground equipment is in good working condition. He inquired if there is an interest in exploring joint City/School participation in the inspection of playground equipment/facilities; whereupon, Dr. Harris advised that the suggestion could be further explored.

Mayor Smith questioned the need for both City and School staff to engage in mowing operations. He also questioned why one entity can perform the service at a lesser cost than the other; and the least expensive method should be used by both entities. He also questioned the need for mowing equipment by both the City and the School system and advised that he would look to the City Manager and the Superintendent of Schools for a recommendation on the most cost efficient manner to approach the issue.

George C. Snead, Jr., Assistant City Manager for Operations, advised that the Schools propose to use part-time summer employees for mowing purposes, in addition to purchasing mowing equipment; the City's proposal to the Schools, which was more expensive than the Schools estimate, called for using current City employees, purchasing a new piece of equipment, mowing at 15 sites at a prescribed contract frequency, with the ability to mow with more frequency, if necessary, at certain sites.

Dr. Harris added that the City requested the School system to purchase a mower at a cost of \$62,000.00 and the School system is of the opinion that if it purchases the equipment, part time school employees could be used and it would be more economical for the School system to handle its own mowing. Mr. Snead clarified that when the mowing contract was entered into, the School system purchased two pieces of equipment for park maintenance, which enables the mowing of a 16 foot swath of grass leading to greater efficiency because larger areas can be mowed at one time.

Dr. Harris advised that the School system will continue to work with the City administration on areas of joint cooperation.

In response to an inquiry regarding savings, if any, through a joint health insurance plan for City and School employees, Dr. Harris called on Paul Britt, Executive for Human Resources, who advised that meetings of City and School staff have been held to discuss a combined health insurance plan and a joint health clinic for City and School employees. He advised that the feasibility of combining health insurance plans for all City and School employees under a single health plan, thereby reducing cost, was discussed; and discussions focused on two particular

areas: a comparison of current health insurance plans and an employee health clinic; an analysis of the health insurance plans revealed certain obstacles would be encountered in order to provide for a single health insurance plan for City and School employees due to the differences in the two plans; and timing is also an issue in terms of how to unite under a single plan for both organizations. He stated that on October 1, 2003, the School system reduced its health plan to a single plan design option, because the School system was facing a 30 per cent increase in costs, which would have resulted in a net of about \$2 million for School employees and \$2 million for the School budget.

Mr. Britt further advised that the second issue centers around the employee health clinic; currently Roanoke City operates its own health clinic which is located on Kirk Avenue, S. W., in downtown Roanoke and is similar to the School facility which is located on Ferncliff Avenue, N. W., where minor injuries are treated, physicals are performed, along with drug screening. He stated that if both facilities were combined, a more centralized location would be needed in order to serve the large number of patients that would be seen through a joint venture for both Roanoke City and the Roanoke City Public Schools. He stated that to combine both organizations under one health plan at this time is not believed to be cost effective, both plans would be required to undergo major changes, especially in view of the decision in October to unite School employees under one health plan. He further stated that combining the health clinics of both organizations could be beneficial, with on staff physicians that would lead to a reduction in the number of trips to a regular physician's office; and the feasibility of combining the health insurance plans of the City and the School System should be studied further in the next three to five years.

In clarification, Dr. Harris advised that on October 1, 2003, the Roanoke City Public Schools switched from providing two health care options from which School employees could choose, to one, thus providing a more comprehensive health insurance plan at a reduced cost, therefore, he would hesitate to recommend any changes at this time; however, a joint health clinic for the two entities could be pursued by City and School staff.

The City Manager advised that thinking long term, it would be to the benefit of the City and the Schools to have health insurance plans that are more comparable, then look at the issue of consolidation, etc, and timing is an important issue to be considered.

STATE BUDGET:

The City Manager advised that on Tuesday, April 6, 2004, Senator John S. Edwards and Delegate Onzlee Ware will jointly sponsor a public forum in the Auditorium at William Fleming High School to seek public comments on the status of the State budget. She stated that the School Board will also be in session at William Fleming High School at the same time and encouraged the School Board, staff, parents and other interested parties to let their views be known at the public forum.

PATRICK HENRY HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT/CITY DEBT CAPACITY:

Vice-Mayor Harris advised that at the Budget and Planning Committee meeting which was held earlier in the day, Council was briefed by the Director of Finance on capital projects in the context of the City's debt policy. He stated that the bottom line is that the City has planned for William Fleming High School improvements and to partner with the School Board in servicing of the debt, but the caveat is, if there is a significant cost overrun, the City will be in a problematic situation relative to other projects that are currently on the drawing board, and speaking as one Member of Council, he would not be in favor of shifting the City's debt policies to accommodate debt. He added that it is important to remember that the City accommodates its debt to debt policies, and not vice versa, which has allowed the City to maintain its AA bond rating as referenced by the City's bond rating agencies in their reports at the time of financing or refinancing of bonds.

Vice-Mayor Harris called upon the Director of Finance to present a summary of the briefing that was presented to Council at a meeting of the Budget and Planning Committee.

The Director of Finance advised that:

- The debt policy was initially adopted by Council in September, 1999, and updated in April 2003; the Government Finance Officers Association "best practice" was developed to establish parameters for issuance of debt, to outline the purposes for which debt may be used, to establish monitoring tools to enable bench marking of debt internally and in comparison to other similar localities, and to demonstrate a commitment to long range financial planning; and the policy was developed in coordination with the City's financial advisor, BB&T Capital Markets, and in communication with the Municipal Bond Rating Agencies: Moody's, Standard and Poor and Fitch.

- Components of the Policy include:

Introduction
 Guidelines for Debt Issuance
 Limitations on Level of Debt to be Issued and Outstanding
 Self-Imposed Debt Targets
 Types of Debt Issuance
 Advance Refunding of Debt
 Investor Relations, Disclosure and Communication
 Debt service fund balance
 Definitions

- Planned Bond Issues Tax Supported:
Fiscal year 2005

Lincoln Terrace Elementary School – \$1,300,000.00
 Police Building Phase II – \$6,670,000.00
 Fire – EMS Facilities – \$4,431,000.00
 Art Museum/IMAX Theater – \$3,700,000.00
 Riverside Centre for Research and Technology – \$5,400,000.00
 Patrick Henry High School – \$39,275.00*

Fiscal year 2006

Patrick Henry High School – \$7,500,000.00*
 Elementary School Additions – \$4,700,000.00

*The total to be issued for Patrick Henry High School between FY05 and FY06 is \$46,775,000.

- Planned Bond Issues–Tax Supported:

Fiscal year 2007

Elementary School Additions – \$2,000,000.00

Fiscal year 2008

Multi Purpose Recreation Center – \$7,000,000.00
 Fire – EMS Facilities – \$4,400,000.00
 Flood Reduction Project – \$5,000,000.00
 William Fleming High School – \$37,275,000.00*

Fiscal year 2009

William Fleming High School – \$7,500,000.00*

*The total to be issued for William Fleming High School between FY08 and FY09 is \$44,775,000.00.

- Assumptions on Debt and Funding of Debt Service

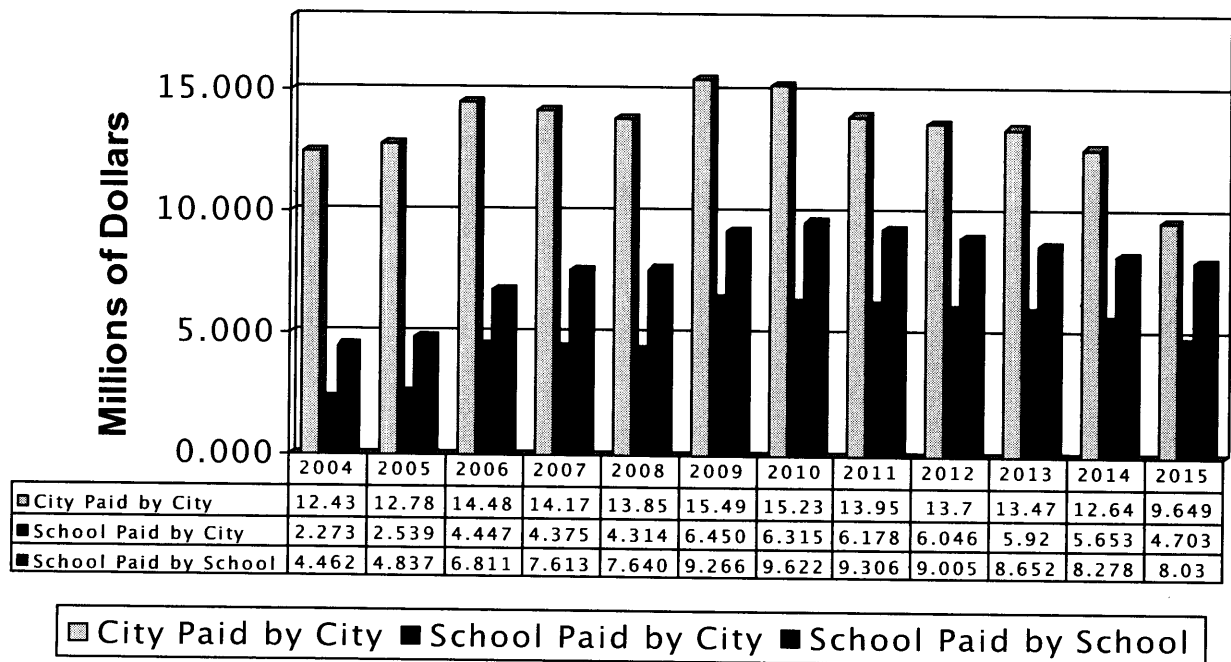
Tax supported debt includes general obligation bonds, VPSA bonds, QZABs, Literary Fund Loans and capital leases; future General Obligation and Virginia Public School Authority bonds were amortized using level principal and an interest rate of five per cent in 2005 and six per cent in years beyond 2005; future Literary Fund Loans were amortized at an interest rate of three per cent; all debt amortized over 20 years.

- Funding for debt service increases based on the following assumptions:

Increased funding of debt service of an additional \$570,000.00 per year through fiscal year 2009

Dedication to debt service funding of incremental increases in EMS fees through fiscal year 2007.

Future City and School Debt Service:

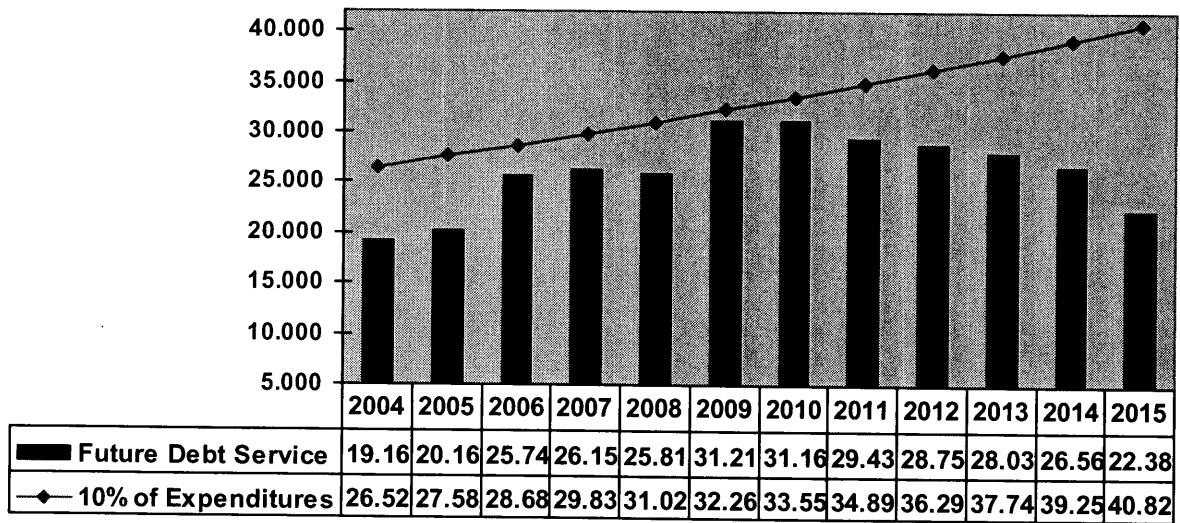


Ratio of Debt Service to General and School Fund Expenditures
(10%)

	<u>City Projects</u>	<u>School Projects</u>	<u>Overall</u>
• FY 2001	4.2%	2.4%	6.6%
• FY 2002	4.1%	2.3%	6.4%
• FY 2003	5.9%	3.0%	8.8%
• FY 2004	4.7%	2.5%	7.2%
• FY 2005	4.6%	2.7%	7.3%
• FY 2006	5.1%	3.9%	9.0%
• FY 2007	4.8%	4.0%	8.8%
• FY 2008	4.5%	3.9%	8.3%
• FY 2009	4.8%	4.9%	9.7%
• FY 2010	4.5%	4.8%	9.3%

Note: Assumes annual expenditure growth of 4%

Debt Service Compared to General and School Fund Expenditure 10% Limit
(In millions)



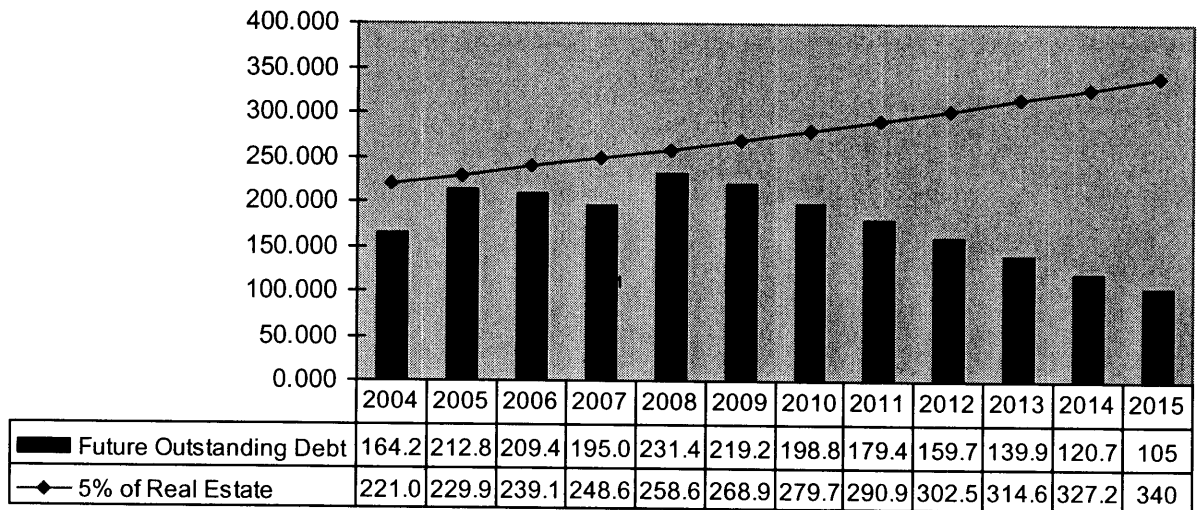
Ratio of Net Bonded Debt to Assessed Value of Real Estate (5%)

	<u>City Projects</u>	<u>School Projects</u>	<u>Overall</u>
• FY 2001	2.0%	1.6%	3.6%
• FY 2002	2.8%	1.7%	4.5%
• FY 2003	2.5%	1.5%	4.0%
• FY 2004	2.2%	1.5%	3.7%
• FY 2005	2.4%	2.2%	4.6%
• FY 2006	2.1%	2.3%	4.4%
• FY 2007	1.8%	2.1%	3.9%
• FY 2008	1.9%	2.6%	4.5%
• FY 2009	1.6%	2.4%	4.1%
• FY 2010	1.4%	2.2%	3.6%

Note: Assumes growth of 4% in assessed value of real estate.

Net Bonded Debt Compared to 5% Limit Future Assessed Value of Real Estate

(in millions)



Reduction of Aggregate Debt within Ten Years (50 per cent)

(Reflects Issuance of Planned Future Debt)

	<u>City</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Overall</u>
FY 2004	74%	70%	72%
FY 2005	72%	67%	70%
FY 2006	75%	64%	70%
FY 2007	77%	71%	74%
FY 2008	76%	62%	68%
FY 2009	79%	68%	73%
FY 2010	83%	71%	76%

Question was raised as to whether the \$3.7 million for the Art Museum/IMAX Theater will be needed in fiscal year 2005; whereupon, the City Manager advised that the Executive Director states that the funds will not be needed until after July 1, 2004.

Ms. Wyatt inquired about future and pending major projects that are not currently included on the list of capital projects; whereupon, the City Manager advised that as a result of the library study there is an expectation that some improvements will be needed to the library, whether it be renovation of the Commonwealth Building or other improvements; the Parks and Recreation Master Plan calls for two multi-purpose centers, as well as other improvements such as historic buildings (i.e. taking recreation programs out of buildings like Mountain View Recreation Center in order to preserve the facility); additional fire stations that are planned as Phase II and Phase III that will include a new fire station in the Williamson Road area because it is expected that the Airport will take over the fire station currently located at the Airport to be used strictly for Airport purposes; and storm water management, with the expectation that the function will be user fee generated.

There being no further business, at 1:30 p.m., the Mayor declared the meeting of Council in recess until 1:35 p.m., in the Council's Conference Room, fourth floor, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building; and Chairperson Manns declared the meeting of the School Board adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

At 1:35 p.m. the Council meeting reconvened in the Council's Conference Room, forth floor, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, for a briefing on the Housing Strategic Plan, with all Members of the Council in attendance, except Council Members Fitzpatrick and Dowe, with Mayor Smith presiding.

HOUSING/AUTHORITY: The City Manager recognized Michael Etienne, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services, for a briefing on the Housing Strategic Plan.

Mr. Etienne advised that:

The Comprehensive Plan, Vision 2001–2020, calls for a Housing Strategic Plan.

The Plan will serve as a City wide goal and policy document for the development of a diversity of housing choices.

The consultant team consists of K. W. Poore and Associates, with 25 years of project management, general planning services and facilitation experience; and Development Strategies, Inc., with 35 years of market analysis, survey research and marketing advice.

- Intended outcomes of the Housing Strategic Plan include:

To identify opportunities for the development of suitable housing in strong neighborhoods.

To provide guidelines for residential investors and builders.

To identify strategies to provide a diversity of housing choices for diverse households and lifestyles.

To provide recommendations on how to reduce concentration of poverty, low-income housing, and encourage mixed income neighborhoods.

To promote market-rate and upscale housing City-wide.

- The facts are:

There is a steady population decline

There is a low per capita income compared to the region

There is a high concentration of poverty

There is aging housing stock and neighborhoods

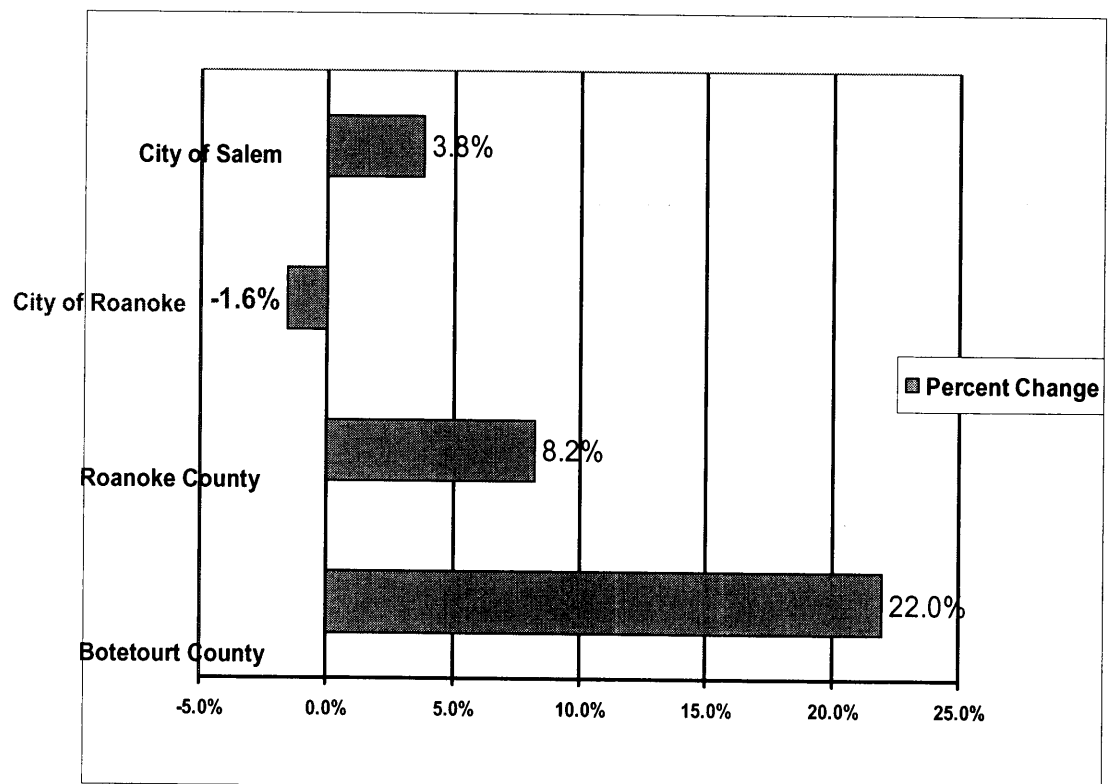
There is a high concentration of low-income housing and vacant units

There is low median house value

There is low home ownership rate

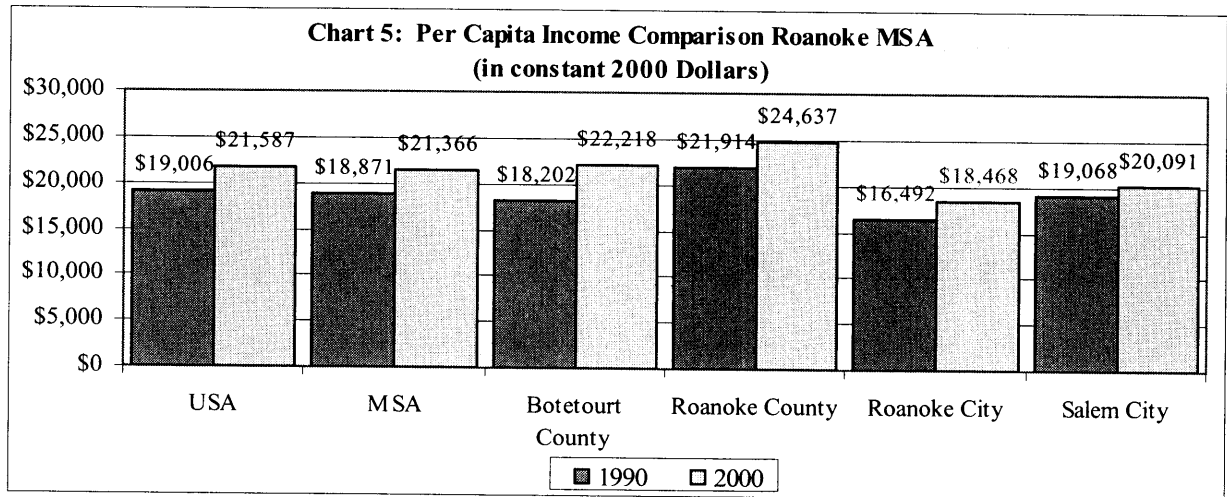
There is a lack of steady supply of market rate and upscale housing.

Regional Population Trend, 1990- 2000

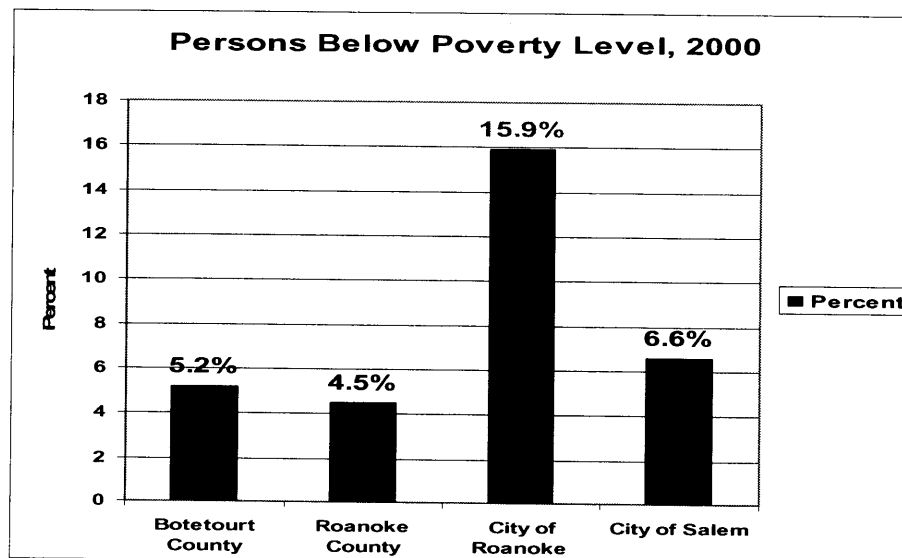


Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Per Capita Income Comparison



Concentration of Poverty, 2000



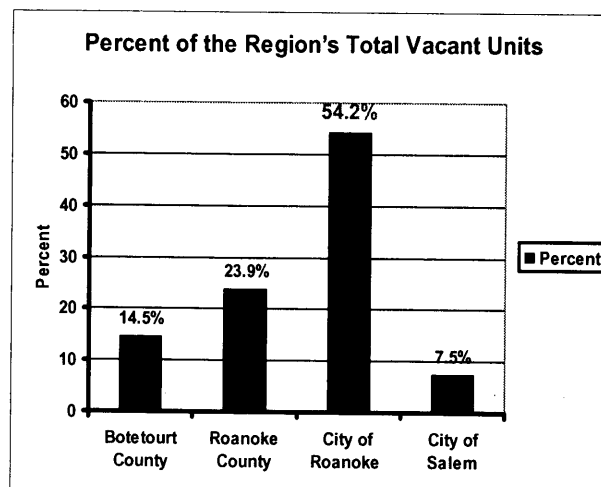
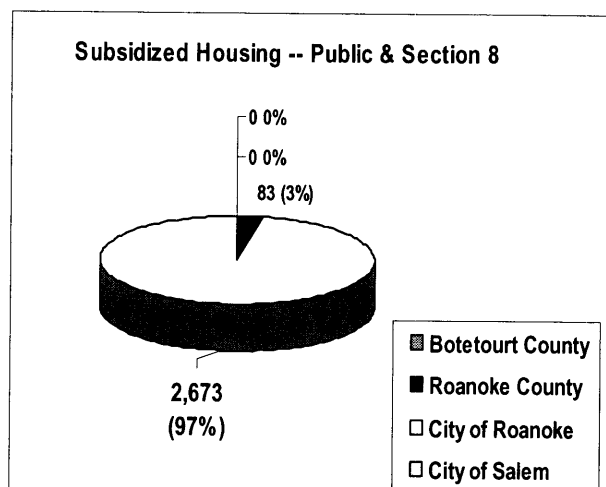
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Aging Housing Stock, 2000

	Botetourt County (12,571)	Roanoke County (36,121)	City of Roanoke (45,257)	City of Salem (10,403)
1990 to 2000	3,132	5,592	2,817	1,118
1970 to 1989	4,731	16,663	9,451	3,207
1940 to 1969	2,950	11,997	23,490	4,882
1939 or earlier	1,758	1,869	9,499	1,196

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Subsidized and Vacant Housing, 2000



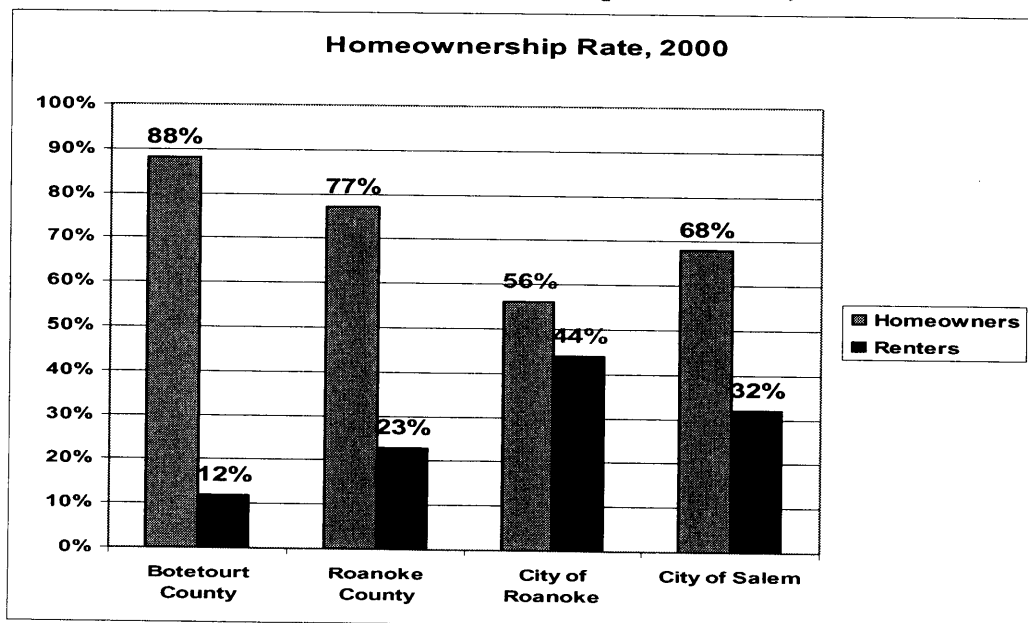
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

House Value, 2003

House Value	City of Roanoke
Less than \$50,000	15.9%
\$50,000 - 79,999	34.0%
\$80,000 - 99,999	26.6%
\$100,000 - 124,999	11.0%
\$125,000 and over	12.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

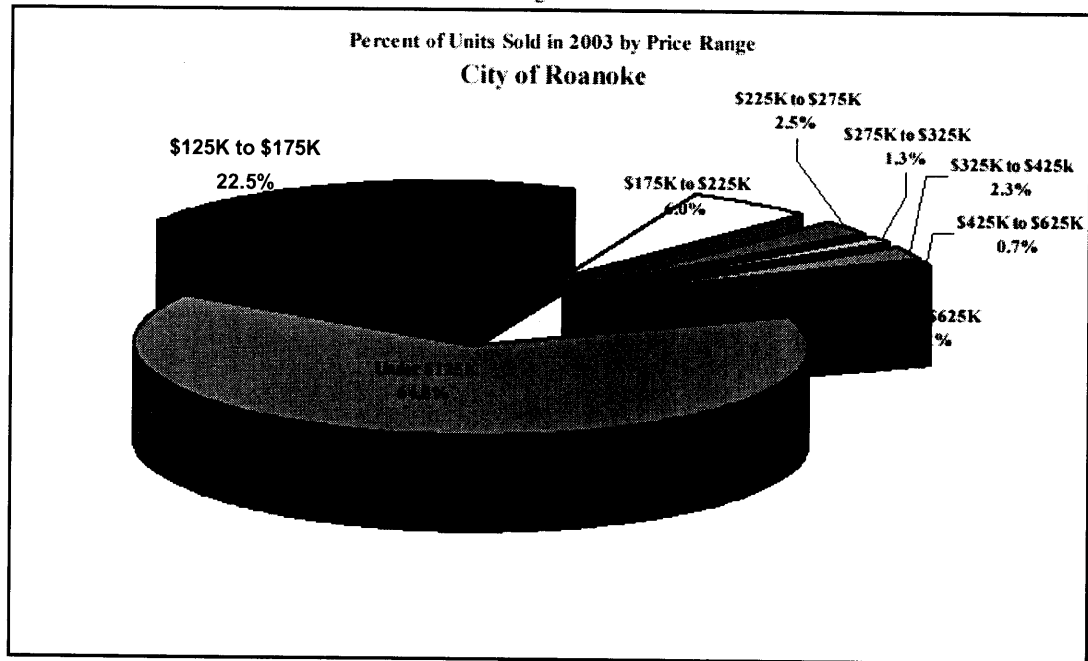
Homeownership Rate, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Diversity of Housing Choices, 2003

Figure 7



- Input by Stakeholders:

- Key Impediments to Developing Upscale Housing:

- Negative perception of the public schools
 - Aging housing stock and infrastructure
 - Lack of available land for new construction
 - Lack of housing diversity and supply
 - Poor marketing of the City

- Possible Solutions:

- Perception of the City as a whole needs to change
 - City may need to re-focus its housing incentive programs

Provide incentives for developers and high-end buyers

Focus on developing market-rate housing, while improving the quality of low to moderate income housing.

- Current Initiatives to Reverse the Trends:

Denying Low Income Housing Tax Credit proposals desiring to continue the concentration of low-income housing in the City

Soliciting development proposals for City-owned properties to promote mixed-use, higher-end housing

Providing pre-development financing and infrastructure assistance to market-rate housing developers

Sponsoring a national Housing Design Competition

Exploring ways to creatively use Community Development Block Grant funds to promote the development of high-end housing

Revitalizing inner-city neighborhoods by adding additional amenities that will raise property values and ultimately attract higher-income residents to those neighborhoods

- Project Approach:

The Planning process is divided into three phases:

Phase One: Housing Market Research

Analyze conduct focus group meetings to identify attitudes and perceptions

Assess the competitive regional housing market data

Advantages/disadvantages of Roanoke compared to the region

Identity “market niches” that Roanoke's neighborhoods serve

Phase Two: Strategic Planning

Develop neighborhood improvement programs

Long term strategies to promote the City's housing stock and neighborhoods

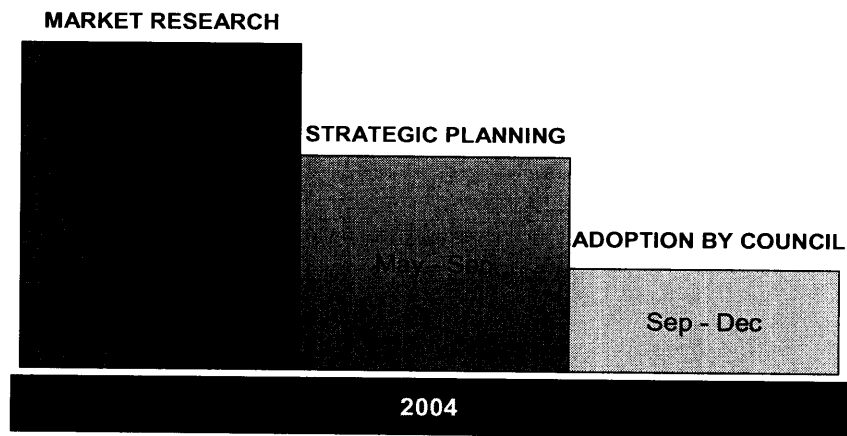
Long term strategies to develop upscale housing

Initiatives to improve Roanoke's competitiveness within the region

Phase Three: Adoption by Council

Public participation will be included in all three phases

Project Schedule



The Steering Committee is composed of the following:

Roanoke City Council:
Alfred T. Dowe, Jr.
Linda F. Wyatt

Roanoke City School Board:
Alvin L. Nash

City Planning Commission:
Paula Prince

Board of Zoning Appeals:
Joel Richert

City Staff:

Beth Neu
Brian Townsend
Mike Etienne
Rolanda Russell

Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority:

Ben Fink
John Baker

Roanoke Neighborhood Advocates:

Shirley Bethel

Roanoke Valley Association of Realtors:

Kit Hale
Downtown Roanoke, Inc.
David Diaz

Homebuilders Association:

Amy Kelderhouse

Regional Housing Network:

Laura Benjamin

Regional Planning Commission:

Eddie Wells

Industrial Development Authority:

Gordon Hancock

It was noted by a Member of Council that some persons might say that the City is attempting to position low income persons out of their traditional neighborhoods; whereupon, Mr. Etienne responded that the goal is to provide diversity in neighborhoods by not concentrating one income group or race in a neighborhood.

An observation was made by a Member of Council that the City should constantly look for ways to promote home ownership because the number one way for most low income persons to build wealth in their personal life is through home ownership.

ACTS OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

The City Manager advised that the City of Roanoke will be recognized as one of America's Most Liveable Communities at an event to be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2004, at the National Press Club in Washington, D. C. She stated that the

award is presented to five small cities in the United States by Partners for Liveable Communities, a nonprofit organization, in recognition of those communities that are attempting to develop their localities in a creative economy and taking major strides to prepare for the new global economy. She inquired as to whether Council would like for staff to coordinate a local celebration for Roanoke's citizens following the event.

It was the consensus of Council to hold a community celebration at a later date.

The Council meeting was declared in recess at 1:55 p.m., to be reconvened at 2:00 p.m., in the Council Chamber.

At 2:00 p.m., on Monday, April 5, 2004, the Council meeting reconvened in the City Council Chamber, fourth floor, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, S. W., City of Roanoke, Virginia, with Mayor Smith presiding.

PRESENT: Council Members C. Nelson Harris, Linda F. Wyatt, William D. Bestpitch, M. Rupert Cutler, Alfred T. Dowe, Jr., Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr. (arrived late), and Mayor Ralph K. Smith-----7.

ABSENT: None-----0.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Darlene L. Burcham, City Manager; Timothy R. Spencer, Assistant City Attorney; Jesse A. Hall, Director of Finance; and Mary F. Parker, City Clerk.

The meeting was opened with a prayer by The Reverend Richard Mallory, Pastor, Morgans Baptist Church.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by Mayor Smith.

PRESENTATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

PROCLAMATIONS: The Mayor presented a proclamation declaring the month of April 2004, as Scottish American History and Heritage Month.

PROCLAMATIONS-HOUSING/AUTHORITY: The Mayor presented a proclamation declaring the month of April 2004, as Fair Housing Month.

PROCLAMATIONS-COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT: The Mayor presented a proclamation declaring the week of April 11 - 17, 2004, as National Public Safety Telecommunicator's Week.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor advised that all matters listed under the Consent Agenda were considered to be routine by the Members of Council and would be enacted by one motion in the form, or forms, listed on the Consent Agenda, and if discussion was desired, the item would be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered separately.

ROANOKE MEMORIAL HOSPITALS-DONATIONS/CONTRIBUTIONS-CITY PROPERTY: A communication from the City Manager advising that pursuant to requirements of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, the City of Roanoke is required to hold a public hearing on the proposed conveyance of City-owned property; whereupon, she requested that Council authorize a public hearing to be held on Monday, April 19, 2004, at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, on the proposed conveyance of a portion of City owned property, Official Tax No. 4060502, to Roanoke Memorial Hospital, was before the body.

Mr. Cutler moved that Council concur in the request of the City Manager. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Member Fitzpatrick was not present when the vote was recorded.)

EASEMENTS-PARKS AND RECREATION-ROANOKE GAS COMPANY: A communication from the City Manager advising that pursuant to requirements of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the City of Roanoke is required to hold a public hearing on the proposed conveyance of an easement; whereupon, she requested that Council authorize a public hearing to be held on Monday, April 19, 2004, at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, on the proposed conveyance of an easement in Jackson Park to Roanoke Gas Company, was before the body.

Mr. Cutler moved that Council concur in the request of the City Manager. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: -----0.

(Council Member Fitzpatrick was not present when the vote was recorded.)

EASEMENTS-CABLE TELEVISION: A communication from the City Manager advising that pursuant to requirements of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the City of Roanoke is required to hold a public hearing on the proposed conveyance of an easement; whereupon, she requested that Council authorize a public hearing to be held on Monday, April 19, 2004, at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, on the proposed conveyance of an easement at 111 Franklin Road, S. W., to Cox Communications, was before the body.

Mr. Cutler moved that Council concur in the request of the City Manager. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Member Fitzpatrick was not present when the vote was recorded.)

LEASES-COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA BUILDING: A communication from the City Manager advising that the United States General Services Administration (GSA) currently leases space within the Commonwealth Building; GSA uses the second floor of the building for the Federal Bankruptcy Court and affiliated offices; the current lease expired on January 31, 2004; GSA wishes to continue its lease of the second floor and to begin leasing an office suite on the first floor as well; and GSA also wishes to extend the current agreement to allow time to complete the necessary improvements to the expanded area before executing the new lease, was before Council.

The City Manager recommended that Council authorize a public hearing to be held on Monday, April 19, 2004, at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

Mr. Cutler moved that Council concur in the request of the City Manager. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Member Fitzpatrick was not present when the vote was recorded.)

COMMITTEES-SCHOOLS: A communication from Harriet S. Lewis tendering her resignation as a member of the Virginia Western Community College Board of Directors, was before the Council.

Mr. Cutler moved that the resignation be accepted and that the communication be received and filed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Member Fitzpatrick was not present when the vote was recorded.)

COMMITTEES-YOUTH: A communication from Marion Vaughn-Howard, Superintendent, Youth Services Division, Parks and Recreation Department, advising of the resignations of Cheryl D. Evans, Amy R. Barger and Jamaal Jackson as members of the Youth Services Citizen Board, was before Council.

Mr. Cutler moved that the resignations be accepted and that the communication be received and filed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Member Fitzpatrick was not present when the vote was recorded.)

COMMITTEES-HOUSING/AUTHORITY: A communication from Joseph F. Lynn tendering his resignation as a member of the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, effective March 8, 2004, was before Council.

Mr. Cutler moved that the resignation be accepted and that the communication be received and filed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Member Fitzpatrick was not present when the vote was recorded.)

BUILDINGS/BUILDING DEPARTMENT-COMMITTEES-GREENWAY SYSTEM:

The following reports of qualification were before Council:

Peter W. Clapsaddle as a member of the New Construction Code, Board of Appeals, for a term ending September 30, 2008; and

Talfourd (Fourd) H. Kemper, Jr., as a member of the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission to fill the unexpired term of Brian Shepard, resigned, ending June 30, 2004.

Mr. Cutler moved that the reports of qualification be received and filed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Member Fitzpatrick was not present when the vote was recorded.)

REGULAR AGENDA

SCHOOLS: The Mayor advised that the following persons have applied for two vacancies on the Roanoke City School Board, for terms commencing July 1, 2004 and ending June 30, 2007:

Dennis M. Binns
Chris H. Craft
Robert R. Craig
David M. Dabay
Roddy L. Hiduskey

Glenda D. Lee
Alvin L. Nash
Samuel Robinson
Linda F. Wright
Linda F. Wyatt

Council Member Wyatt read the following statement:

"STATEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST"

I Linda F. Wyatt state that I have a personal interest in the selection of persons to be interviewed for appointment to the Roanoke City School Board. Therefore, pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3112, I must refrain from participation in this matter. I ask that the City Clerk accept this statement and ask that it be made a part of the minutes of this meeting.

Witness the following signature made this 5th day of April 2004.

S/ Linda F. Wyatt"

The Mayor stated that on or before April 20 of each year, Council must select the names of those persons to receive the formal interview for School Trustee, which interviews will be held on Thursday, April 22, 2004, at 4:30 p.m., in the Council Chamber. He advised that the matter will be discussed as a part of the Council's Closed Session regarding vacancies on boards and commissions.

(See page 51 for further information on this item.)

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

AIRPORT-BUDGET: A communication from Jacqueline L. Shuck, Executive Director, Roanoke Regional Airport, advising that in accordance with requirements of the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission Contract dated January 28, 1987, as amended, the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission is submitting its Fiscal Year 2004-2005 Operating Budget for approval, which budget was adopted by the Airport Commission at its meeting on March 10, 2004, and includes a separate listing of Capital Expenditures that are expected to exceed \$100,000.00 in cost and are intended to benefit five or more future accounting periods.

Mr. Bestpitch offered the following resolution:

(#36648-040504) A RESOLUTION approving the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission's 2004-2005 proposed operating and capital budget, upon certain terms and conditions.

(For full text of Resolution, see Resolution Book No. 68.)

Mr. Bestpitch moved the adoption of Resolution No. 36648-040504. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harris and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Member Fitzpatrick was not present when the vote was recorded.)

(Council Member Fitzpatrick entered the meeting.)

REPORTS OF OFFICERS:

CITY MANAGER:

BRIEFINGS:

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: The City Manager submitted a status report on Affirmative Action and Diversity Initiatives of the City of Roanoke for calendar year 2003.

She advised that as one of the largest and the most ethnically and racially diverse communities in the Roanoke Valley, it is important for the City of Roanoke to encourage participation in all employment processes among the diverse population that it serves; with this goal in mind, the City is focusing on two diversity related initiatives: increasing the diversity of its workforce and developing the knowledge and skill base needed for success in a diverse work environment; and the City's success in accomplishing these initiatives will make the City of Roanoke a better organization and ultimately help the City to reach the strategic goals set by the Council.

It was further advised that efforts at increasing workforce diversity are based on a broad and focused recruitment program; the City continues to forge relationships and to develop partnerships among City staff, EEO/civil rights organizations, colleges and universities, sororities, fraternities and other groups interested in diversity; and progress continues to be made in this area.

It was explained that during 2003, several African-Americans were hired in two key positions, the Director of Civic Facilities and the Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services, as well as the Acting Director of Management and Budget; total employment by department and EEO categories as of December 31, 2003, are detailed in attachments to the report; and since the beginning of 2004, the City has hired women in the positions of Director of Human Services and as the Acting Manager of Purchasing, which key appointments, in addition to those that occurred in 2003, are another indicator of the City's commitment to a more diverse workforce.

It was further explained that employment data for 2003 shows that 42 of the 202 new hires (19.7 per cent) and 20 of the 102 promoted (19.6 per cent) were people of color; while this information is somewhat different from last year, 25.6 per cent and 19.7 per cent respectively, it is important to note that the number of new hires who are minorities and/or women in the protective service category increased slightly; Police, Sheriff and Fire/EMS represent 28 per cent of the City's workforce and each of these departments have promotional systems that are substantially closed to outside candidates (as is the case with most comprehensive public safety departments nationally); therefore, if the City is to increase the number of women and minorities substantially in these departments, it must be done at the entry level and the City is committed to this effort; and City staff will continue to refine the City's recruiting methods to accomplish this objective.

It was advised that in May 2003, the Department of Human Resources, in partnership with the Roanoke Branch of the NAACP, sponsored the third Recruitment Day; out of 55 attendees, four were ultimately hired, which represents the highest new hire ratio for this event; the City has established relations with over ten colleges and universities, as well as participated in a Technology Job Fair in Richmond that was part of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) basketball tournament; the City continues its recruitment efforts at military installations and historically black colleges and universities; however, military base recruitment has slowed due to the current conflict in the Middle East; the City continues to co-sponsor This Valley Works Job Fair, which attracts more than 2400 job applicants and 60 employers each year; the Internship Program continues to attract high-caliber rising college seniors and ten interns were hired last year, one-half of which were persons of color; as a part of the Internship Program, the City has forged relationships with the civil engineering programs at the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech and North Carolina A&T State University in an effort to place women, or persons of color, in

either a cooperative education arrangement or an internship; the City also participated in the Minority Job Expo sponsored by The Roanoke Times; and recruitment initiatives will continue to emphasize building relations with local groups interested in workforce diversity.

It was stated that the City is making headway in its diversity efforts, but it needs to take the next step; in a practical sense, ownership of leading diversity efforts will be moved from Human Resources to an internal Leadership Diversity Advisory Group; using employee survey data collected by Virginia Tech as a starting point, the group will work to understand individual and departmental impediments related to diversity, and advise training staff, Human Resources and the City Manager concerning diversity programs and policies; in order to improve the City's ability to recruit more women and people of color, particularly in public safety positions, the City will continue to refine its efforts to attract more women and minorities; and using ideas from an advertising company, coupled with strategies to recruit at different venues, it is the City's intent to attract more women and minorities to City employment opportunities.

In conclusion, the City Manager advised that the City has devised a sound diversity strategy and is headed in the right direction, particularly in the area of increasing diversity capacity; the City organization has not been as successful in regard to hiring more minorities; however, this is a long term commitment that requires constant attention, and attention and dedication will continue to be provided which is required to make Roanoke a truly high quality diverse employer.

Brenda Hale, 3595 Parkwood Drive, S. W., President, Roanoke Branch NAACP, advised that four years ago, she offered an environment of collaboration in order to work with the City to improve diversity in the City's workforce; whereupon, she expressed appreciation to the City Manager for the City's efforts during that time. She also expressed appreciation for a City administrative team that is not only talented but diverse, including professionals and other key African-Americans in higher level management positions. She commended the City Manager on implementing continued diversity training programs, for fostering an environment of inclusiveness, and for giving the City's Human Resources Department carte blanche to further advance collaboration. She also commended the various programs designed for Roanoke's youth and intern programs that have proven to be successful with a high degree of African-American participation. She called attention to areas in need of improvement in public safety (Fire, Police and Sheriff's departments) which remain under represented by minorities. She stated that the NAACP remains steadfast in its efforts to make a difference and looks forward to the fourth annual Recruitment Day on Saturday, May 1, 2004, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at the Roanoke Civic Center; great progress has been made in the City's Employee Development Program which provides an excellent venue for current City employees to advance in their jobs; and the City Manager should be commended on implementation of an internal leadership diversity advisory group

that will lead to more opportunities to increase the recruitment of women and minorities in key City positions; and Bennett College which is located in Greensboro, North Carolina, is excited about future recruiting opportunities that will be made available to this historic black women's college. She noted that the Local Chapter of the NAACP remains steadfast in its commitment and looks forward to the day when a true reflection will include the more than 70 nations that are represented in the City of Roanoke.

Council Member Wyatt advised that when she began her service on Council ten years ago, one of her major concerns was the lack of female firefighters and very few police women, none of whom held rank in their departments. She called attention to progress in the Police Department which now has a total of 16 women, both black and white, who have joined the rank and file, but only seven women have received promotions in the Fire Department. She stated that she has been advised that standards in the Fire Department have changed and it is almost impossible for a woman to pass the test for promotion. If that statement is true, she expressed concern that the City is taking a step backward and requested that the City Manager determine if the standards for promotion within the Fire Department have been changed.

Council Member Bestpitch expressed appreciation to Ms. Hale for the cooperation and involvement of the Roanoke Chapter NAACP during her tenure as President. He advised that the ownership of this initiative must be larger than the City Manager, City officials and City staff and must involve ownership by the total community in order to be successful. He stated that it is only through the continued involvement and support of organizations like the Roanoke NAACP that the City will be successful in its recruiting efforts, because the issue must be addressed at the entry level within certain City departments, and if people of color and other minorities do not get the message that they are wanted, that they are encouraged to apply for City positions and to be part of the City work force, they will not apply.

Council Member Dowe concurred in the remarks of Ms. Hale and Mr. Bestpitch and advised that he is personally encouraged by the present direction of the City. He stated that he could not remember a time when there was as much diversification at the top level of senior leadership, and he is encouraged by the continued conscientious efforts displayed by City leadership in regard to employment and diversity. He expressed concern that in Roanoke, as in other parts of the country, there is a tendency to focus on two different races; i.e.: white males versus black males in management positions which is approximately 82 per cent to ten per cent, however, in service and maintenance areas, the percentage is closer to 46 – 41 per cent. He asked that the City continue its efforts to cause the discrepancy to be closer, continue to look for quality people, and to look outside the two genres of black and white.

Dr. Cutler expressed appreciation to the City Manager for her leadership and to Ms. Hale for her positive attitude and support as President of the Roanoke NAACP. He inquired as to what extent the Roanoke City School System and the City of Roanoke have worked together to encourage minority students in the City's school system to seek employment with the City of Roanoke upon graduation from high school or college; i.e.: through internships and/or cooperative education programs.

The City Manager responded that young people in the City's School System have been encouraged to participate in the City's Internship Program, the goal of which is to link them psychologically to the City of Roanoke so that when they graduate from college, they will consider employment with the City, or in local government in general, because there is a need to attract the best and the brightest to public service and to expose young people to public service careers. She stated that a better job should be done to advise young people of the kinds of careers that are available in the Roanoke community, not just through local government, but through local businesses as well; and the City is working through its Economic Development Department with School officials and others to create mentorships at a much younger age so that young people will be aware of future employment opportunities in the Roanoke area.

Vice-Mayor Harris echoed the remarks of Council Member Dowe that the City is moving in the right direction. He expressed appreciation to Ms. Powell for her leadership as President of the Roanoke Branch of the NAACP and commended what has been a positive and cooperative relationship with Council during her tenure as President. He stated that the spirit of cooperation has allowed the City of Roanoke to move forward on this issue and to successfully address other challenges.

Mr. Bestpitch moved that the communication be received and filed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harris and unanimously adopted.

ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR ACTION:

BUDGET-ENTERPRISE ZONE: The City Manager submitted a communication advising that in January 1996, the Commonwealth of Virginia designated an area within the City of Roanoke as an Enterprise Zone, which zone will expire on December 31, 2015, and is known as Enterprise Zone Two.

It was further advised that a requirement of designation is that the City of Roanoke will offer certain local incentives, which were set forth in the original application and subsequent amendments approved by Council; when the zone was originally designated in 1996, Council appropriated funds for local incentives for both Enterprise Zone One (designated in 1984 and expired on December 31, 2003) and Enterprise Zone Two; funds are about to be depleted

and in order for the City to continue to offer local incentives as set forth in the designation application and subsequent amendments, additional funds need to be appropriated; and the Department of Economic Development has estimated the short-term (three to six months) funding need at approximately \$98,000.00.

The City Manager recommended that Council transfer \$63,563.00 from Capital Improvement Reserve Economic Development Account No. 008-530-9575-9178 and appropriate \$34,370.00 from Capital Fund Interest Earnings Account No. 008-3325, to Enterprise Zones 1 and 2 for utility connection rebates in Account No. 008 310 9630 9003.

Mr. Cutler offered the following budget ordinance:

(#36649-040504) AN ORDINANCE to appropriate funding for the Enterprise Zone Fund, amending and reordaining certain sections of the 2003-2004 Capital Projects Fund Appropriations and dispensing with the second reading by title of this ordinance.

(For full text of Ordinance, see Ordinance Book No. 68.)

Mr. Cutler moved the adoption of Ordinance No. 36649-040504. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fitzpatrick and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----7.

NAYS: None-----0.

BUDGET-NEWSPAPERS-STREETS AND ALLEYS: The City Manager submitted a communication advising that there was a need by *The Roanoke Times* to replace curb and sidewalk as a part of the construction of its new building; the City agreed to include the curb and sidewalk replacements as a part of the Salem Avenue Streetscape project; in return, *The Roanoke Times* agreed to reimburse the City for its share of construction costs; and the City has received a check in the amount of \$31,700.00 from *The Roanoke Times* for its share of the project.

The City Manager recommended that Council appropriate \$31,700.00, representing repayment by *The Roanoke Times* to Curb, Gutter, and Sidewalk, Account No. 008-530-9804-9004, and establish a revenue estimate of \$31,700.00 in the Capital Projects Fund.

Mr. Fitzpatrick offered the following budget ordinance:

(#36650-040504) AN ORDINANCE to appropriate funding received from a third party for the Salem Avenue streetscape project, amending and reordaining certain sections of the 2003-2004 Capital Projects Fund Appropriations, and dispensing with the second reading by title of this ordinance.

(For full text of Ordinance, see Ordinance Book No. 68.)

Mr. Fitzpatrick moved the adoption of Ordinance No. 36650-040504. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----7.

NAYS: None-----0.

PURCHASE/SALE OF PROPERTY-POLICE DEPARTMENT-BUDGET: The City Manager submitted a communication advising that construction on the Police Building Phase II project is scheduled to begin during the summer of 2004; due to the small size of the site, it is necessary to obtain temporary construction easements of variable width from three adjacent property owners, which easements are needed in order to construct a three story structure at the west property line, to include layback for building foundation, and to provide space for a crane and materials lay-down to the south; and temporary closure of the alley immediately behind the Police Building site is also required.

It was further advised that authorization is needed to move forward with acquisition of the necessary property rights in the form of temporary construction easements on four parcels identified as Official Tax Nos. 1011304 owned by Campbell Place, LLC; 1011319, 1011320 owned by Roy H. Park Broadcasting of Roanoke; and 1011335 owned by the American National Red Cross.

It was explained that total acquisition costs for related expenses such as title reports, environmental inspections, and alternative parking locations are estimated to be \$45,000.00; funding from Fire/EMS Facility Improvements may be transferred to cover the expenses, and the Fire/EMS Facility Improvements account will be reimbursed from the proceeds of bonds to be issued in fiscal year 2005 for Phase II of the Police Building project.

The City Manager recommended that Council take the following actions:

Authorize the City Manager to acquire all property rights as above described, subject to an acceptable environmental inspection and title report; such property rights may be acquired by negotiation and include temporary construction easements only.

Transfer \$45,000.00 from Account No. 008-530-9678-9003 Fire/EMS Facility Improvements to the Police Building Design-Ph. II, Account No. 008-530-9567-9003.

Adopt a resolution declaring the City's intent to reimburse itself from the proceeds of general obligation public improvement bonds to be issued for the project, the total amount of the bonds to be issued is anticipated to be \$6.67 million.

Mr. Cutler offered the following budget ordinance:

(#36651-040504) AN ORDINANCE to appropriate funding for the Police Phase II Project, amending and reordaining certain sections of the 2003-2004 Capital Projects Fund Appropriations and dispensing with the second reading by title of this ordinance.

(For full text of Ordinance, see Ordinance Book No. 68.)

Mr. Cutler moved the adoption of Ordinance No. 36651-040504. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fitzpatrick and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----7.

NAYS: None-----0.

Mr. Harris offered the following ordinance:

(#36652-040504) AN ORDINANCE providing for the acquisition of certain temporary construction easements needed by the City for the construction of the Police Building Phase II Project, providing for the City's acquisition of such easements by negotiation; and dispensing with the second reading by title of this ordinance.

(For full text of Ordinance, see Ordinance Book No. 68.)

Mr. Harris moved the adoption of Ordinance No. 36652-040504. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----7.

NAYS: None-----0.

Mr. Fitzpatrick offered the following resolution:

(#36653-040504) A RESOLUTION declaring the City's intent to reimburse itself from the proceeds of its general obligation public improvement bonds for certain moneys to be appropriated by the City for expenditures in connection with the Police Building Phase II Project; and providing for an effective date.

(For full text of Resolution, see Resolution Book No. 68.)

Mr. Fitzpatrick moved the adoption of Resolution No. 36653-040504. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----7.

NAYS: None-----0.

WATER RESOURCES-FEE COMPENDIUM: The City Manager submitted a communication advising that currently, City water system customers, through water billings, pay the majority of operational costs to maintain the recreational facilities at the Carvins Cove Natural Reserve (Reserve); this funding commitment was recognized by Council when it adopted a two tier user fee system for non-boating activities, providing City residents a lower rate to access the Reserve; and user fees do not replace operational funding, but have allowed the Departments of Parks and Recreation and Utilities to make capital improvements that would not otherwise have occurred without impacts to water rates.

It was further advised that with the creation of the Western Virginia Water Authority, customers of Roanoke County's water system will also assume operational costs not funded by user fees; and it is appropriate to modify the user fee structure to provide member residents of the Western Virginia Water Authority with access to the Reserve through the lower tier rate.

The City Manager recommended that Council adopt a resolution amending the City's Fee Compendium to reflect changes to the Boat Rentals and User Fees at Carvins Cove, effective April 15, 2004.

Mr. Dowe offered the following resolution:

(#36654-040504) A RESOLUTION amending certain fees and charges in connection with use of Carvins Cove Natural Reserve, amending the Fee Compendium; and providing for an effective date.

(For full text of Resolution, see Resolution Book No. 68.)

Mr. Dowe moved the adoption of Resolution No. 36654-040504. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cutler.

Mr. Cutler advised that on or about July 1, 2004, which is the target date for establishment of the Western Virginia Water Authority, a boundary will be drawn on ownership maps at Carvins Cove between that part of the property essential to the water supply function including the reservoir and pipelines, the treatment plant and the buffer around the reservoir that will revert to the Water Authority; and the balance of the almost 13,000 acre area of the Carvins Cove Natural Reserve will remain in the ownership and responsibility of the City of Roanoke, and will be treated as a recreational facility, the number one concern being the purity of the water that runs into the water supply reservoir. In summary, he stated that boating will become a responsibility of the Western Virginia Water Authority and recreation and the uplands will continue to be a responsibility of the City of Roanoke.

Resolution No. 36654-040504 was adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----7.

NAYS: None-----0.

ASBESTOS REMOVAL-COMMONWEALTH BUILDING: The City Manager submitted a communication advising that in an effort to streamline the procurement of asbestos and lead abatement services for various City departments, a one year Asbestos and Lead Abatement Services contract was executed between the City of Roanoke and Waco, Inc., of Christiansburg, Virginia, dated November 26, 2003, in accordance with the City's advertising and procurement procedures; and total fee for the initial contract was an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00 based on the expected need at that time for such services.

It was further advised that due to the number of requests by City departments to have asbestos and/or lead abatement activities performed under the contract, the \$100,000.00 amount was exceeded; as a result, Amendment No. 1 to the Asbestos and Lead Abatement Services contract was administratively executed in February 2004 to increase the contract amount by \$50,000.00.

It was explained that demand for abatement services under the existing contract continues; in order to continue to meet the needs of City departments for upcoming, as well as unanticipated abatement projects, it is requested that Amendment No. 2 to the contract be approved to increase the contract amount by an additional \$75,000.00; approval is required by Council since the amount of Amendment No. 2, combined with Amendment No. 1, exceeds \$50,000.00 in changes from the original contract amount; and funding for Amendment No. 2 is available through various City operating accounts determined by the department requesting abatement services.

The City Manager recommended that she be authorized to execute Amendment No. 2, in the amount of \$75,000.00 with Waco, Inc., for the above described work, in a form to be approved by the City Attorney.

Mr. Dowe offered the following ordinance:

(#36655-040504) AN ORDINANCE authorizing the City Manager's issuance and execution of Amendment No. 2 to the City's contract with Waco, Inc., for asbestos and lead abatement services; and dispensing with the second reading by title of this ordinance.

(For full text of Ordinance, see Ordinance Book No. 68.)

Mr. Dowe moved the adoption of Ordinance No. 36655-040504. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wyatt and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----7.

NAYS: None-----0.

CITY ATTORNEY:

CITY EMPLOYEES-VALLEY VIEW MALL: The City Attorney submitted a written report advising that the City of Roanoke plans to sponsor Citizen Appreciation Day at Valley View Mall on April 17, 2004; the new owners of the mall, CBL & Associates Management, Inc., require that the City execute an agreement in order to use the mall; the agreement contains a provision which requires that the City agree to indemnify and hold harmless CBL, and to defend it, in the event that anyone is injured or anything is damaged during the City's use of the premises; only Council can waive the City's sovereign immunity and agree to such provision; and CBL has refused to delete the provision.

The City Attorney transmitted a resolution for consideration by Council which authorizes the waiving of the City's sovereign immunity, and authorizes the City Manager to execute the agreement.

Mr. Fitzpatrick offered the following resolution:

(#36656-040504) A RESOLUTION authorizing the waiver of the City's sovereign immunity in connection with the City's use of Valley View Mall for Citizen Appreciation Day, and authorizing execution of an agreement with Valley View Mall, LLC, through its agent, CBL Associates Management, Inc., in connection with such use of Valley View Mall.

(For full text of Resolution, see Resolution Book No. 68.)

Mr. Fitzpatrick moved the adoption of Resolution No. 36656-040504. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dowe and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----7.

NAYS: None-----0.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE:

AUDITS/FINANCIAL REPORTS: The Director of Finance submitted the Financial Report for the month of February 2004.

Clarification was requested by the Director of Finance in regard to a statement that several one time collections totaling approximately \$300,000.00 were received which resulted from a State tax audit conducted during the current fiscal year that revealed under payment of prior year sales taxes.

The Director of Finance advised that the City of Roanoke receives an annual report from the State which details the amount of sales taxes that companies within the City are required to remit to the State, of which the City of Roanoke receives a one per cent share; it was discovered that a local company was not included in the report because the company had changed ownership; the matter was pursued at the State level and it was discovered that the State remitted the funds to the wrong locality.

Clarification was also requested in regard to a \$51,000.00 one time collection as a result of a cellular telephone tax audit; whereupon, the Director of Finance advised that the Department of Billings and Collections is responsible for administering the cellular phone tax; because of the geographical layout of the Roanoke Valley, if a customer lives on the border of a locality, it is difficult to determine which locality, the customer resides in; considerable time was spent with several cellular phone companies to determine residency status of customers; and the \$51,000.00 represents the third significant collection by the City of Roanoke from cell phone companies that were previously paying the tax to the wrong locality.

Council Member Cutler made the observation that it appears that business at the Roanoke Civic Center is increasing when looking at the overall revenue picture; whereupon, the Director of Finance advised that Civic Center staff has worked diligently to deposit gross profits from Civic Center events into the City's General Fund in a more timely manner.

Without objection by Council, the Mayor advised that the Financial Report for the month of February, 2004 would be received and filed.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES: NONE.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NONE.

INTRODUCTION AND CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS: NONE.

MOTIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

INQUIRIES AND/OR COMMENTS BY THE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL:

ACTS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT-CITY COUNCIL-HOCKEY: Council formally commended the Roanoke Express hockey team upon placing number two in the East Coast Hockey League Division.

ELECTIONS-REGISTRAR: Vice-Mayor Harris requested that the City Manager, in consultation with the Registrar, provide Council with either an oral briefing or a written report, in regard to the new touch screen voting machines which are proposed to be used in the May 4, 2004 local election.

Vice-Mayor Harris advised that the Members of Council have received correspondence from citizens who are concerned about the touch screen machines due to the experiences of other localities throughout the country, and citizens need some assurance by the Registrar that the machines have been certified, tested, and that Officers of Election have been properly trained on the use of the new equipment.

The City Manager advised that a touch screen voting machine will be available for demonstration purposes during Citizens Appreciation Day on Saturday, April 17, 2004, at Valley View Mall and the Office of Communications will be requested to work with the Registrar to identify other opportunities to showcase the new voting machines to Roanoke's citizens.

The Mayor suggested a hands on demonstration of the new equipment at a future Council meeting.

Council Member Bestpitch made the observation that the system recommended by the Electoral Board for use by the City of Roanoke is a different system than that which is used by Roanoke County and if the two localities use the same type of voting equipment, they could come to the assistance of each other when necessary.

ACTS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT-WATER RESOURCES: Council Member Cutler commended participants from the Appalachian Trail Club, Pathfinders for Greenways, and members of the Roanoke Valley Greenways Commission who volunteered their time to construct a new bridge across the stream at Carvins Cove Natural Reserve.

HEARING OF CITIZENS UPON PUBLIC MATTERS: The Mayor advised that Council sets this time as a priority for citizens to be heard and matters requiring referral to the City Manager will be referred immediately for response, recommendation or report to Council.

ELECTIONS-CITY MANAGER-REGISTRAR-COMMUNITY PLANNING: Mr. Chris Craft, 1501 East Gate Avenue, N. E., expressed appreciation to Council Member Bestpitch for recommending that the City Planning Commission study the renaming of that portion of 13th Street south of Orange Avenue, "Thomas Market Street", in recognition of the contributions of the Thomas family. He advised that a touch screen voting machine is on display in the Registrar's Office and Officers of Election will be available at each polling place to assist voters at the local election on May 4. He commended the City Manager for addressing issues of concern to the East Gate community.

ELECTIONS-COMPLAINTS-ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD: Mr. E. Duane Howard, 508B Walnut Avenue, S. W., advised that inasmuch as the new voting machines have not been tested at this time, he would strongly encourage the City to use the old voting machines in the May 4, 2004 Councilmanic election. He also spoke in regard to a suggestion which was made by Vice-Mayor Harris earlier in the day during a meeting of the Budget and Planning Committee that the matter of funding a \$1,200.00 per annum stipend for members of the Architectural Review Board be referred to fiscal year 2005 budget study. He expressed concern that two members of the same family currently serve on the Architectural Review Board and the Board of Zoning Appeals which is a conflict of interest, and stated that if Council approves a stipend for Architectural Review Board members, it should be based on the provision that the stipend will apply to future members of the Architectural Review Board and that no current member of the Board will be entitled to receive the annual stipend.

Y.W.C.A.– HARRISON HERITAGE CENTER–SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION–HENRY STREET REVIVAL COMMITTEE: Ms. Helen E. Davis, 35 Patton Avenue, N. E., expressed concern in regard to rumors that:

- A four story Social Security Administration building will be located on Henry Street;
- The Harrison Museum of African American Culture will be relocated to the Henry Street area and plans include construction of a building adjacent to the Dumas Hotel; and
- The Orange Avenue YMCA will be closed, and, if so, what is the future status of the building.

COMMITTEES–SCHOOLS: Ms. Evelyn D. Bethel, 35 Patton Avenue, N. E., requested that the public hearing and interview of School Trustees be conducted in public Council session. The Mayor advised that Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, April 19, 2004, at 7:00 p.m., to receive the views of citizens on School Board applicants and public interviews will be conducted on Thursday, April 22, 2004, at 4:30 p.m., in the City Council Chamber, and will be open to the public.

COMPLAINTS–CITY EMPLOYEES–ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Mr. Robert E. Gravely, 729 Loudon Avenue, N. W., expressed concern in regard to the use of taxpayers' dollars as incentives for businesses to locate and/or relocate to the City of Roanoke. He called attention to low wages for those employees at the bottom of the City's pay scale, a lack of opportunities for promotion at the lower end of the City's pay scale, and the lack of businesses in the minority community and in the City of Roanoke in general that promote the African American culture.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:

BUDGET–ACTS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT–LEGISLATION: The City Manager presented information prepared by Thomas A. Dick, the City's Legislative Liaison, in connection with various State budget proposals as they relate to the availability of local funds for the City of Roanoke. She called attention to a public forum which will be held on Tuesday, April 6, 2004, at 7:00 p.m., in the Auditorium at William Fleming High School, at which time citizen comments will be invited in regard to the lack of a State budget at the present time, and with regard to which budget proposals (The House or Senate versions) that appear to provide the greatest benefit to the Roanoke community. She encouraged those citizens in attendance to urge the Virginia General Assembly to adopt a two year biennial budget.

The City Manager advised that the City of Roanoke will be recognized as one of America's Most Liveable Communities at an event to be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2004, at the National Press Club in Washington, D. C. She explained that the award is presented to five small cities in the United States by Partners for Liveable Communities, a non-profit organization, in recognition of those communities that are attempting to develop their localities in a creative economy and taking major strides to prepare for the new global economy. She stated that a special celebration will be held in the City of Roanoke following the April 20 presentation.

At 3:50 p.m., the Mayor declared the meeting in recess for one Closed Session.

At 5:10 p.m., the meeting reconvened in the Council Chamber, with Mayor Smith presiding and all Members of the Council in attendance.

COUNCIL: With respect to the Closed Meeting just concluded, Mr. Cutler moved that each Member of City Council certify to the best of his or her knowledge that: (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in any motion by which any Closed Meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered by City Council. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harris and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Council Members Harris, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick, and Mayor Smith-----6.

NAYS: None-----0.

(Council Member Wyatt abstained from voting.)

COMMITTEES-HOUSING/AUTHORITY: The Mayor advised that there is a vacancy on the Fair Housing Board inasmuch as Brenda Powell has served three consecutive three years terms of office and is ineligible to serve another term; whereupon, he opened the floor for nominations to fill the vacancy.

Mr. Bestpitch placed in nomination the name of Rich G. McGimsey.

There being no further nominations, Mr. McGimsey was appointed as a member of the Fair Housing Board for a term ending March 31, 2007, by the following vote:

FOR MR. MCGIMSEY: Council Members Harris, Wyatt, Bestpitch, Cutler, Dowe, Fitzpatrick and Mayor Smith-----7.

COMMITTEES-SCHOOLS: Mr. Bestpitch moved that Council extend the deadline for receipt of applications for appointment to the Roanoke City School Board until Monday, April 19, 2004 at 12:00 noon, with a public hearing to receive the views of citizens on School Board applicants to be held at 7:00 p.m., on Monday, April 19, 2004; following the public hearing, Council will select the persons to be accorded the formal interview to be held on Thursday, April 22, 2004, at 4:30 p.m., in the City Council Chamber; and Council will appoint two Trustees to the Roanoke City School Board at a special meeting to be held on Thursday, May 13, 2004, at 2:00 p.m., in the City Council Chamber. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cutler and adopted, Council Member Wyatt abstained from voting.

There being no further business, the Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

A P P R O V E D

ATTEST:

Mary F. Parker
City Clerk

Ralph K. Smith
Mayor
